



Assemble 2pm at Downing Street, central London
called by Stand Up To Racism & Unite Against Fascism

**Protest at fascist rally
in London this Saturday**



Truth about one-time British National Party member
who was jailed last month >>Pages 10&11

**We reveal the REAL face
of führer Tommy Robinson**

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Friday Tommy Robinson's crew march in Leeds



PICTURE: PA



GRENfell

**Blame the
Tories not the
firefighters**

by ALISTAIR FARROW

IT IS almost impossible for anyone to deny the failures that led to the Grenfell Tower fire and at least 71 deaths. But there is now a battle over who is responsible.

The latest stage of the inquiry into the blaze at the west London tower block heard opening statements from central figures and organisations on Monday.

Five "expert" reports into the causes of the fire were released at the same time. The reports slam decisions made during the refurbishment of the tower, but also raise problems with the safety of the tower which predate the refurbishment.

Doors meant to "self-close" failed to do so. Windows with



gaps and faults aided the spread of the fire. There was a "culture of non-compliance" in relation to the tower's maintenance.

The cladding was "substantially to blame". A video shot at 1.08am showed the fire coming from one flat.

Four minutes later the fire had begun to engulf the whole building.

The reports are a damning indictment of the consequences of decades of deregulation of the building and safety industries.

It meant the number of firms such as Harley Facades grew. It was the "building envelope subcontractor for the Grenfell Tower refurbishment

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Tuesday Mosque and a Sikh gurdwara set on fire

PRICE OF NAZI 'FREE SPEECH'

A MOSQUE and a Sikh gurdwara in Leeds were attacked in the early hours of Tuesday morning in what police are treating as "hate crimes".

The attacks follow a march in Leeds last Friday in defence of jailed fascist Tommy Robinson. They are a

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THE THINGS THEY SAY

'If Corbyn is saying a Labour government is going to ride roughshod over the independence of our museums, what will be next?'

Former culture minister Ed Vaizey on Corbyn's pledge to return the Elgin Marbles to Greece

'He's the only minister who is still being a minister'

Hedge fund boss Crispin Odey on why he backs Michael Gove as next prime minister

'A chateau-bottled, irrelevant twerp'

Tory grandee Sir Nicholas Soames on Odey

'He should shut up and go away'

Soames really doesn't like him

'Absurd waste of money'

Tory Kirstie Allsopp on why she makes her kids fly economy—while she goes business class

'Okay stop nagging me'

Former Labour spin doctor Alastair Campbell to his daughter live on radio



Inquest opens into the death of Rashan Charles after arrest

AN INQUEST into the death of Rashan Charles opened in north London on Monday. Rashan died in July last year shortly after being stopped by the police in a shop in Hackney, east London.

He was just 20 years old and his death sparked angry protests.

One of Rashan's relatives left the inquest on Monday after CCTV footage of his restraint by a police officer was shown.

The footage showed the officer grabbing Rashan from behind before wrestling him to the ground.

Another officer later arrives and is shown trying to give Rashan first aid.

The coroner, Mary Hassell, has granted both officers involved anonymity despite rejecting claims that there was a "direct threat to officers' lives".

She decided to place a large



Rashan Charles

black curtain from wall to wall in the courtroom in order to uphold this.

The first officer will be known as BX47 and the second as BX48.

Two witnesses have also been granted anonymity and will be known as Witness 1 and Witness 2. The inquest is expected to last for 12 days.

CCTV footage of Rashan being restrained also showed paramedics removing a pack-age from his mouth.

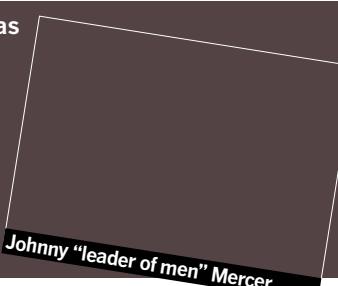
The Independent Police Complaints Commission, now the Independent Office for Police Conduct, conducted an initial investigation following Rashan's death.

It found that a package removed from Rashan's body was not a "controlled substance" and contained a mixture of caffeine and paracetamol.

The inquest continues.

TORY BACKBENCHER Johnny Mercer has spoken at 90 dinners on the grassroots circuit in the last year, sparking claims he is being groomed to succeed Theresa May.

Party "sources" have let it be known the ex-Army officer was not the type "to put himself forward" but was a "hell of a leader of men". Mercer told the press, "My focus is first and foremost on my constituents in Plymouth."



Johnny "leader of men" Mercer

TORY Tracey Crouch's garden is decorated with plastic gnomes of Margaret Thatcher and John Major. "They've followed me around since the mid-1990s," says the sports minister. Most experts frown on Thatcherite gardening—non-intervention followed by brutal cuts.

Cop steals £60,000 from his own mother

A FORMER police officer left his disabled mum unable to pay her care home fees after stealing £60,000.

Paul Gibbs was in charge of mum Lynn's cash but took thousands after the sale of her house to spend on games and treats.

Gibbs, an ex-airman commended for bravery in the Gulf War, claimed he had "miscalculated" her finances, Stoke-on-Trent crown court heard.

Jailing him for three years, Judge David Fletcher said Gibbs



"grossly abused" the trust put in him.

A police officer has been dismissed for using "seemingly racist language" to threaten a Polish bouncer.

Drunken Mark Baird mimicked the doorman's accent and said it was "because of people like you that I can't get in".

The off-duty PC told him, "I'm going to smash your head in," a Humberside Police misconduct panel at Goole was told.

Sweatshop wages for expensive shirts

ENGLAND'S World Cup kit sells for £160, but is made in a factory in Bangladesh where workers are paid as little as 21p an hour.

The official Nike shirt and shorts, part of the most expensive England kit ever, are made at a factory inside a government-controlled zone where female garment workers are paid as little as £1.68 a day.

Workers in Savar, near the capital Dhaka, work 60 hours a week. In 2016, the

FA gave Nike a 12-year contract extension worth £400 million.

Nike, which makes the England strip, says it does business "ethically and sustainably" and suppliers must pay "at least the local minimum wage or prevailing wage".

World Cup strip Football Association bosses said they had received "assurances that all England products are manufactured in accordance with the law". That's alright then.

Newcastle stumps Sheffield

MORE than 110,000 trees have been chopped down in three years by councils.

Sheffield—where the council has caused uproar by felling about 10 percent of its street tree population—is only the third-most prolific city at felling.

It is exceeded by Newcastle, where 8,414 trees have been felled, and Edinburgh, with 4,435. The figure for Sheffield is 3,529.

More than 70 councils said they did not keep records of trees felled, despite it being a government requirement.

People 'bored' of politicians

EX-LABOUR prime minister Gordon Brown has hit on the reason why politicians get booted out of office so regularly.

Apparently it has nothing to do with their unpopular policies, but it's all the fault of the "24-hour news cycle".

Brown explained at the Hay Festival, "There will be no ten years of any other prime minister again.

"The 24-hour nature of news moves so quickly and people get bored very quickly with personalities. They find out about them and move on."

This unlikely theory might be some comfort to Brown, who was prime minister for less than three years.

Cost of living longer goes up

The cost of fresh fruit and vegetables in supermarkets is soaring. Analysts Brand View found that average vegetable prices are up by 2 percent across 360 products. Some have risen more than others.

An own-label broccoli is 14.3 percent more expensive than it was a year ago. And a kilo of Braeburn apples has gone up by over 21 percent.

Politicians and the press like to bemoan the failures of poorer people to eat well and look after themselves.

We are told that health problems are down to individual choices. In reality it's much easier to be healthier if you have more money.

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Blame Tories' system not firefighters for Grenfell

>>continued from page 1

project". Its opening statement said, "We offer our sincere condolences to all those concerned."

That will come as little comfort to those who lost relatives and friends in the fire as a result of the firm's actions.

Why, in the words of one member of survivors' group Grenfell United, was "a petrochemical blanket wrapped around the building"?

FBU firefighters' union general secretary Matt Wrack last week said that Grenfell Tower was "effectively coated in petrol".

He was responding to attempts by politicians and the media to scapegoat firefighters for the deaths.

Dr Andrew O'Hagan, an editor at the London Review of Books, wrote a lengthy piece describing events on the night of the fire and in the aftermath.

"The firefighting effort wasn't all that it could have been," wrote O'Hagan.

Safety

And Sarah Baxter at the Sunday Times newspaper wrote that firefighters are in thrall to "the bureaucratic gods of health and safety".

But it was a lack of health and safety regulations, not too many, that caused the horror.

Firefighters are not responsible for political choices to loosen building safety requirements.

Elsewhere in his piece O'Hagan sympathetically interviewed Rock Feilding-Mellen, the Tory councillor who was in charge of housing at Kensington and Chelsea council.

He also defends the council's "pretty good record of protecting social housing".

"It's unreasonable and unjust to accuse people of knowing things they were never expected to know," wrote O'Hagan.



FLAMMABLE CLADDING on Grenfell Tower

Picture: Guy Smallman



Tory Rock Feilding-Mellen called a survivor a "fantasist"

to reveal the "rotten and cancerous" decisions at a local level which led to the fire. "I can't begin to express the level of contempt they had for us residents," said Edward.

What's missing from the reporting on the inquiry, and the inquiry itself, is the political context.

Fire

Then London mayor—now foreign secretary—Boris Johnson axed dozens of London fire engines.

Former Tory housing minister Brandon Lewis described the promotion of fire sprinklers as the "responsibility of the fire industry, rather than the government".

At every opportunity we must point to the people who made the Grenfell Tower fire inevitable—the

Tories and others who did not care about safety.

The right wing media and politicians want the inquiry to focus on individual responsibility. They want to prevent scrutiny of a system which allows working class people to die.

But the inquiry chair, Sir Martin Moore-Bick, has already been forced to make concessions to survivors and the families of the people killed.

That means campaigners have to keep up protests and other forms of pressure to in order to get justice.

The monthly Silent Walk is set to take place on Thursday 14 June at 6.30pm outside the Notting Hill Methodist Church, W11 4AH. A solidarity march is set to take place at Downing Street on Saturday 16 June.
bit.ly/GrenfellSolidarity

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NORTHERN IRELAND

MPs debate abortion law change

ABORTION Rights activists were set to protest outside parliament, as Socialist Worker went to press on Tuesday.

The demonstration will follow an emergency debate on a woman's right to choose in Northern Ireland.

It comes after the inspiring vote to liberalise abortion law in Ireland last month.

In her speech on Monday arguing for a debate on the legislation, Labour MP Stella Creasy said "The impact of the Irish referendum has been felt around the world.

"2.1 million people voted, of which 1.4 million voted to repeal article 8, which prevents abortion.

"In doing so, they have thrown a spotlight on the situation in Northern Ireland, where a million women are affected."

Illegal

Abortion is illegal in Northern Ireland unless it presents a "serious risk" to the pregnant woman's life or health.

Creasy wants to repeal the parts of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 that relate to abortion.

The motion on Tuesday won't change the law. But it could add to the growing pressure on Theresa May to extend the 1967 Abortion Act to Northern Ireland.

She is unwilling to do anything to anger the Northern Irish DUP who are propping up the Tories.

And May's reluctance to intervene is contributing to a brewing crisis for the government.

Sarah Bates

IN THIS WEEK

1968

Women machinists at Ford walk out

WOMEN WORKERS at Ford plant in Dagenham, east London walked out on 7 June over pay regrading.

Their battle led to the introduction of the Equal Pay Act 1974.

New threat from the far right can't be ignored

Thousands of racists and fascists were set to march on Downing Street this Saturday, says Tomáš Tengely-Evans

FASCISTS ARE mobilising for their jailed figurehead Tommy Robinson in another warning of the growing threat of the far right. They plan "Free Tommy" marches through London, Newcastle and York this Saturday.

Unite Against Fascism and Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) have called protests to oppose them. Every anti-fascist has to be on the streets to stop the forces of British fascism from regrouping.

The jailing of Nazi Tommy Robinson at Leeds court last week has acted as a lightning rod for the far right.

The fascists are angry—and sense an opportunity to build and regroup around turning Robinson into a "free speech" martyr. Around 350 of them rampaged in Leeds on Friday, chanting, "Muslims—off our streets."

Tackle

The London march has been called by alt-right internet personality Vinnie Sullivan, who rails against "Anarcho-Communism" and argues, "Our goal is to tackle the alt left".

And, dangerously, it has attracted wider support outside of the fascists' ranks.

Ukip leader Gerrard Batten has

BACK STORY

The DFLA has grown into a serious right wing threat that is becoming more organised

- Fascist Tommy Robinson is increasingly at the centre of the organisation

- Saturday's protests will demand his release from prison after he filmed outside an abuse trial

- The fascist right is regrouping and building links with Ukip

- The left, Labour and trade unions must unite to take on and defeat this new, dangerous threat



THE FAR right are on the march—outside Leeds Crown Court last Friday

taken up the "Free Tommy" cause. At Robinson's 4,000-strong "free speech" rally in central London last month he made an antisemitic speech and called on the crowd to join Ukip.

Ukip's leadership hopes it can rebuild after the party's wipeout in the local elections last month by relating to the far right.

The bridge between the fascists and Ukip is the Democratic Football Lads Alliance (DFLA), who mobilised over 2,000 in Manchester last Saturday. They chanted, "Oh, Tommy, Tommy" showing that

Robinson has gone from a marginal

figure on their demonstrations to a main focus.

Their march was a sea of Union Jack and England flags and banners proclaiming, "Make Britain Great Again."

There were also flags with the slogan, "Don't tread on me", associated with the racist right in the US South.

Attacking the left was also a feature of the march, with placards attacking "racist Labour" and others aimed at SUTR.

At a 400-strong counter-protest Dan Lewis, CWU union north west chair, told Socialist Worker, "Tommy Robinson was a fascist and he still is a fascist."

The far right use abuse scandals to push the lie that sexism and

abuse are the preserve of Muslim men.

Robinson was arrested outside the Leeds Court because he was filming during an abuse case, with the aim of whipping up Islamophobia.

Mobilising against the fascists and racists next Saturday—and wherever they try to march—could not be more important.

As Tara, a student from Manchester, told Socialist Worker, "We need stuff like this to make people see that we're not going to give them a space."

A big focus on the protest were child sexual exploitation scandals in towns, such as Rochdale and Telford, where the police and local authorities have failed victims.

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ANALYSIS

CHARLIE KIMBER



What's the answer to grim strike stats?

THE STRIKE figures for 2017, released last week, make depressing reading.

The number of workers who went on strike in Britain fell to the lowest level since the 1890s. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) show 33,000 workers were involved in labour disputes in 2017, down from 154,000 a year earlier.

There have been only been four other occasions over the past 120 years when fewer than 100,000 workers went on strike.

The number of strike days was 276,000, slightly down on 2016. A single dispute—at British Airways—was responsible for a third of the entire 2017 strike days in Britain.

Any particular year's figures are a snapshot, and can change based on one or two disputes. For example, the ONS has already recorded 195,000 strike days for the first three months of 2018, largely due to the university workers' walkouts. We don't know how many strikes didn't happen because bosses made some concessions.

But there is no denying a long-term trend. With occasional and important exceptions, such as the big public sector strikes of 2011, the number of strikes has been low and generally falling over the last 20 years.

This matters because successful strikes are the best way for workers to gain confidence and to build organisation. And the lack of strikes is the major reason why bosses get away with low pay and why young workers are discriminated against.

The lack of strikes doesn't mean workers are blissfully content. The intense pressure of work, the lack of security felt by many and stagnant or falling pay mean the bitterness is as real as ever.

But this doesn't often lead to strikes. This follows a series of defeats combined with union leaders' reluctance to push for struggle, and to strangle it when it begins.

We should be wary about claims that structural changes in the workplace are to blame. One reason put out quite widely last week was that "workplaces are much smaller now".

Except that they aren't. One study shows that the percentage of workplaces with over 500 employees was 3 percent in 1980. It was exactly the same in 2004.

Another study shows that around 20 percent of workers were employed in workplaces of over 500 in 2004. By 2011 it was very slightly higher.

Of course capitalism is constantly shifting how it exploits workers, and each new form poses challenges to trade unionists. The new layers have to be recruited and organised. But this was done in previous eras much more successfully than now.

Fragment

Capitalism, by bringing workers together and exploiting them, pushes workers towards collective action. But bosses also try to fragment resistance and encourage everyone to see themselves as individuals.

Workers are more likely to join a union or go on strike if they see successful struggles elsewhere, or at least that their union has a strategy to win.

We need unions that are hungry for action, not shamefaced and defensive about it. Instead of saying, "We hate doing this" union leaders should say, "We are delighted people are standing up and fighting."

The model of "partnership" with bosses has to be replaced by a recognition of differences between those at the top and those who work for them.

It is 150 years since the Trades Union Congress was founded. Activists have always had to work out how they can use the opportunities created by the union leaders to develop the strength of workers' own independent networks.

Action is the lifeblood of organisation. The biggest generator of new union members recently was the UCU university strikes where 16,000 people joined the union in a year—many of them young people, many on temporary contracts.

Every activist has to push for more like this, to look for the opportunities for resistance and for solidarity with those who are fighting.

And we also need to think how the mood to demonstrate against Donald Trump, or to fight racism and sexism, can flow over into bolder unions and more workplace action.

Union leader wrecks own congress to dodge criticism

There were incredible scenes at UCU congress, reports **Sadie Robinson**

UCU UNION members are fighting to transform their union following a series of undemocratic manoeuvres by the union leadership at its annual congress last week.

Congress was suspended three times after UCU staff and general secretary Sally Hunt walked out to stop motions criticising Hunt being heard.

Annie, a delegate from Sheffield, told Socialist Worker, "I'm really fucking annoyed. Our congress has been hijacked."

One motion called for Hunt to resign and another argued that she should be censured. Another motion called for a democratic review of the union's structures and processes.

This follows widespread anger at Hunt's promotion of a deal with Universities UK (UUK) bosses to end pensions strikes in higher education.

Meser Hameed, a delegate from the University of Bath, told Socialist Worker, "There were people on the picket lines crying about that deal. It seemed like the union officials were on UUK's side."

Called

Following the first walkout on Wednesday, delegate and UCU Left supporter Sean Vernell called on delegates not to leave the conference floor after congress was suspended. Over half the delegates remained.

The Unite union claimed that debating the motions



REBELLION—DELEGATES at UCU congress vote (above). Machinations—general secretary Sally Hunt (left)

between the rights of ordinary UCU staff and Hunt.

Delegates repeatedly voted in favour of debating critical motions. Yet a third walkout on Friday ended congress early and ensured they were not heard.

Delegates stayed to discuss their next steps and drafted a statement. It said, "We believe the union members have the right to hold our most senior elected officials to account.

Democratic

"We resolve to continue the motions at a recall conference and not be distracted from the campaign to defend our members' jobs, pay and pensions." Delegates earlier voted for a recall congress to

debate the motions, and activists are now organising to pass motions in their branches demanding this takes place.

Sean said that activity and resistance are key to transforming the union.

"The strike committees, teach outs and mass pickets during the pensions strike are real democratic structures," he said.

"But they were new and weren't developed enough. So Hunt won the vote on the pensions deal."

"We need to build on these democratic networks and for that we need struggle."

Go to uculeft.org for more and to get involved.
Go to bit.ly/UCUDefy and bit.ly/UCUrocked for more on UCU congress

Left gets organised for future fights

AROUND 125 people came to a UCU Left meeting at UCU congress last Wednesday.

It reflected deep anger at the union leadership and a desire for real change.

Mike, branch secretary of Exeter UCU, said, "There's a power struggle in this union between the rank and file and the ossified establishment."

Marion, who works in Bournemouth, said she was "the angriest" she'd ever been at a UCU congress.

Richard from Tower Hamlets College in east



London said winning change wasn't just about waiting for a "left leadership". "We need more struggle," he said.

Higher education delegates also passed a series of motions seeking more transparency and rank and file control in the pensions dispute.

Sector conferences showed the willingness of UCU members to fight (see page 19).

They will have to keep organising not only to protect their pay, pensions and conditions but also to change their union.

After UCU congress

Where next for the left?

● Open meeting for all UCU members hosted by UCU London Region

● Saturday 9 June, 2-5pm, central London

● Go to After UCU Congress—Where next? #UCUTransformed on Facebook for more details

Tory racism lies behind counter-terrorism laws

TORY PRIME minister Theresa May is fighting to hide her party's deep-seated Islamophobia.

The growing furore over Islamophobia in the Tory Party came as home secretary Sajid Javid announced fresh "counter-terrorism" policies to spy on Muslims on Monday.

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) last week wrote to party chair Brandon Lewis demanding an independent inquiry into Islamophobia in the Tories.

It called for a "full audit to ensure racists and bigots have no place in the party".

The letter listed Islamophobic incidents involving Tory party members from the last two months.

They include Mike Payne, a Tory councillor from west Yorkshire, who shared an article on 5 April that called Muslims "parasites" who "live off the state and breed like rabbits".

Philipa Auton, a Tory council candidate in Hounslow in west London, retweeted Nazi Tommy Robinson on 24 April.

She also argued to "Revoke Muslim immigration, repatriate and secure European borders" to "keep Europe safe."

Such incidents should come as no surprise. They are "just the tip of the iceberg and what is in the public domain" according to the MCB.

As home secretary and then prime minister, Theresa May has pushed policies that make the party attractive to racists and bigots. And she's not the only one that's relied on Islamophobia in the hope of winning votes.

Tory London mayoral candidate Zac Goldsmith ran a vicious racist campaign against Labour's Sadiq Khan in 2016.

Then prime minister David Cameron repeated false claims in the Commons that south London Imam Suliman Gani was an Isis supporter. He said that Khan had "appeared again and again" alongside him.

Brush

Ridiculously, Javid tried to brush off the allegations on the BBC's Andrew Marr show by saying, "Just look at who the home secretary is in this country."

He claimed that the MCB "does not represent Muslims".

But even Tory peer Baroness Sayeeda Warsi said there was "smoldering underbelly" of Islamophobia in the party.

Javid's defence is like claiming that racism does not exist within US society because Barack Obama was twice elected president.

As home secretary, Javid is directly responsible for pushing through racist "counter-terrorism" policies that target Muslims.

The Prevent strategy already



SAJID JAVID appeared on TV and brushed off claims of racism in the Tory party

forces public sector workers, such as teachers, to spy on Muslims for signs of radicalisation.

Javid is now piloting the Consent scheme in Birmingham and Manchester. It focuses on people who are released from prison for terror offences—which can include posting messages online.

This will give the cops and local authorities access to information the British state says it is targeting. No one on the list will know they're on it and its contents can't be disputed.

Tony Blair's New Labour government strengthened Islamophobia to try and break opposition to the US and Britain's wars in the Middle East.

The Tories have continued that strategy and sought to paint Muslims as an "enemy within" segregated from British values.

Fighting Islamophobia means building a mass movement that takes on the Tories' racist attacks.

EU borders cause refugee deaths

SOME 50 people have died after trying to migrate to Europe when their boat capsized off the coast of Tunisia.

The country has become a key route for migrants after EU states along with the Libyan coastguard cracked down on people travelling from Libya.

At least 660 people have died trying to cross the Mediterranean sea so far this year according to the United Nation's International Organisation for Migration.

The EU is responsible for those deaths. It forces people fleeing wars and economic devastation into the arms of people traffickers by branding them "illegal". Inside their borders, EU member states



A camp in Paris is cleared

round people up to chuck them out.

French police "cleared" two refugee camps in Paris on Monday. It follows a similar operation last week.

Around 1,000 people have been living at the Porte des Poissonniers, in northeast Paris, and another site next to the city's Canal Saint Martin.

Several thousand people joined a march in Paris on Saturday against the government's new laws that further attack asylum and immigration rights.

A law is set to be passed in Hungary this week which would introduce jail terms for people found to have helped undocumented refugees.

At the moment just one person a day is allowed to begin the asylum process in the country. Migrants and refugees are treated brutally across Europe. National governments and the EU are to blame for this horror.

FIGURE IT OUT

32 thousand refugees estimated to have travelled to Europe by sea this year

3 thousand refugees died trying to cross the Mediterranean sea in 2017

1 person a day is allowed to start the asylum process in Hungary

Corbyn 'discourse' blasted

A LEADING critic of Jeremy Corbyn has claimed that Corbyn's opposition to Israel means he is antisemitic.

Jonathan Arkush, outgoing director of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, said that Corbyn "has views which are antisemitic".

He made clear his accusations were based on Corbyn's support for the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Stop the War Coalition.

"His associations are clear," Arkush said. "He is a patron of Palestine Solidarity Campaign—if you look at its logo and language, it's quite clear its world picture has no room for Israel."

He added, "Delegitimising the state of Israel is antisemitic.

"He was a chairman of Stop the War, which is responsible for some of the worst anti-Israel discourse.

"He has never disavowed that sentiment. Is this double speak? What are we supposed to think? If he shares the prevalent discourse about Israel, then that view is unquestionably antisemitic."

Arkush's comments are some of the clearest evidence that accusations of antisemitism aimed at the Labour left are intended to limit criticism of Israel.

Full story online at bit.ly/Arkush

Truckers in Brazil show the power of workers

Strikes have won concessions—now the fight is on to stop the right from making gains, says Alistair Farrow

A TRUCK drivers' strike in Brazil has shown how repressive governments can be humbled.

The drivers forced the country's right wing government, and president Michel Temer, to their knees after ten days of stoppages and blockades.

The O Estado de S Paulo newspaper estimated the strike cost the Brazilian private sector almost £7 billion. In total, over 500 road-blocks were erected. The army was called in, but was largely ineffective.

On top of this, oil workers struck for three days from last Wednesday in support of the truck drivers. They shut down multiple oil refineries run by the state oil company Petrobras.

The strikes came after Petrobras hiked prices in an effort to make the sector more profitable and leave the door open for privatisation.

Petrobras CEO Pedro Parente had earmarked over £15 billion in assets to be sold off between 2018 and 2021. That agenda is up in the air after Parente was forced to quit on Friday of last week.

Temer was forced to offer truckers concessions on prices and other benefits to end the strike.

The truck drivers are not all workers, which complicated the strike. Most are self-employed, some are employees and some are owners of trucking firms. This meant the strike was open to pressures from across the political spectrum.

Reforms

Some strikers wanted limited reforms, while others wanted to get rid of Temer's government altogether.

Temer had tried to push division by suggesting that prices in other areas, such as cooking gas, would have to rise to keep diesel costs down. That had little effect on support for the strike.

The context of the strike is the liberalisation of the economy in the two years since the previous president, the left wing Dilma Rousseff, was deposed.

BACK STORY

A strike by truck drivers in Brazil has created chaos for the state

- The strike, sparked by a rise in oil prices, also saw oil workers strike and force a boss to resign
- Michel Temer's right wing government was forced to give concessions to drivers
- But right wingers also claimed to back the action, and will try to capitalise on Temer's crisis
- Bosses are terrified that the action could threaten neoliberal economic reforms in Brazil

She was accused of corruption and impeached—Temer also faces corruption charges.

That process has been cheered on by the international ruling class as Brazil's economy has been opened up to the markets. Those same forces reacted with horror to the truck strikes.

"Where were the institutions? Where were the security forces and the judiciary? It went far beyond what was acceptable," pleaded Marcos de Barros Lisboa, president of Sao Paulo's Insper business school.

The Financial Times newspaper moaned that the strike "threatened the government's liberal economic reform agenda". But there will now be a battle over what comes next.

Far right candidate Jair Bolsonaro, who idealises the military dictatorship in Brazil from 1964 to 1985, publicly backed the strike.

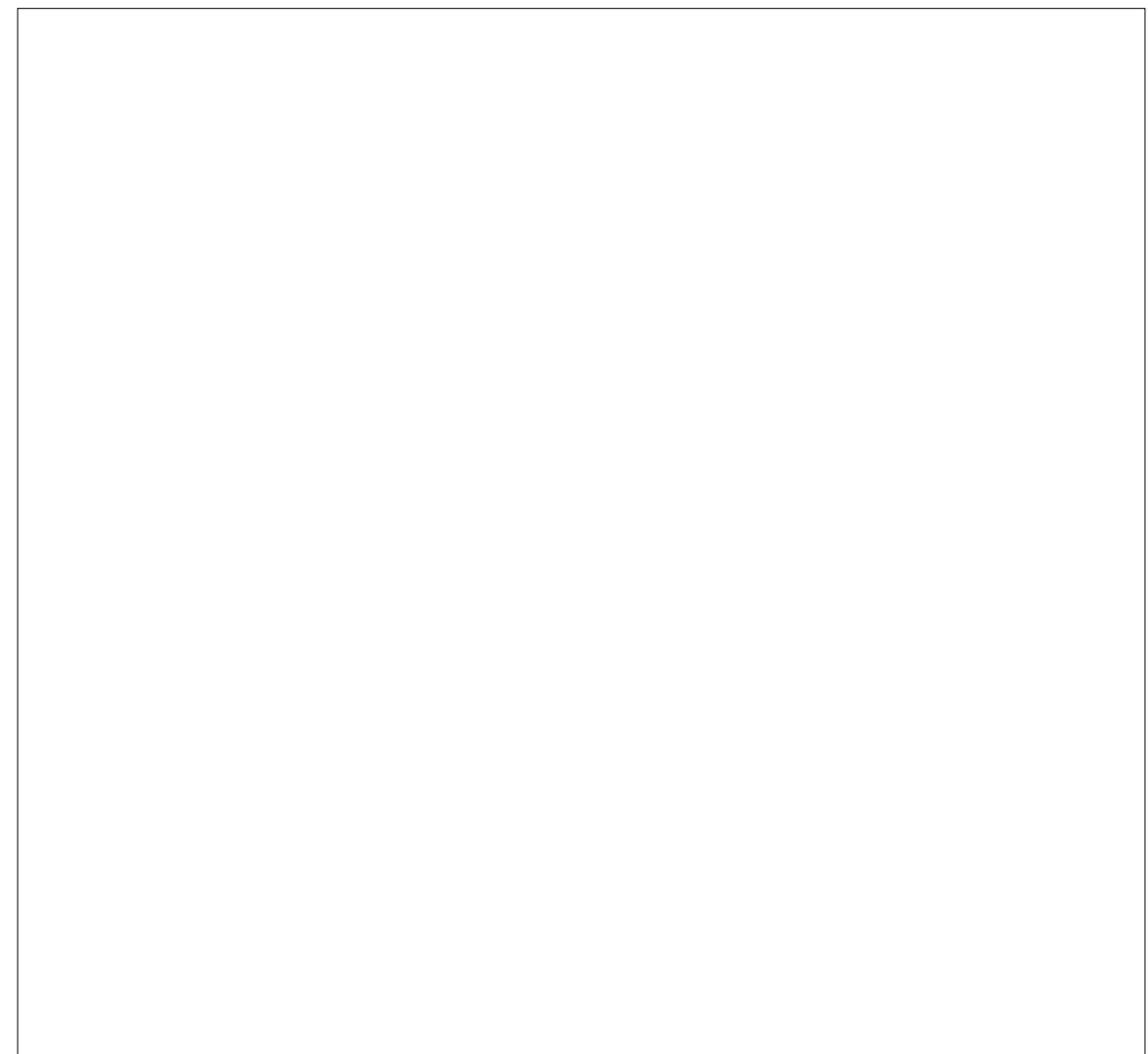
The far right used the strike to raise the possibility of a military coup to restore "order".

The fight is on to beat back the right, reverse economic liberalisation and open the door to the possibility of a different kind of society.



On other pages...

Wave of strikes rocks Iran>>Pages 14&15



STRIKING TRUCK drivers in Brazil try to stop a driver who hadn't joined the protests

Prime minister is forced out in Jordan

by NICK CLARK

MASS STRIKES and protests in Jordan forced prime minister Hani Mulki to resign on Monday.

His resignation came after days of protests and a general strike against a tax hike.

The protests—the largest in years—have quickly become the focus for widespread anger at poverty, austerity measures and pro-market economic reforms.

A general strike on Wednesday of last week involved thousands of workers from 33 trade unions—and was followed by days of mass protests.

They were sparked by the government's plan to raise income tax for some of the

poorest people in Jordan. It's the latest of pro-market measures demanded by the International Monetary Fund, which have also included bread price rises.

Protesters have chanted, "We will not kneel," demanded Mulki resigns, blocked roads and occasionally clashed with police.

The protests forced the government to retreat from planned energy and fuel price rises. But the move failed to quell the anger, leading to Mulki's resignation.

It was not clear whether the tax hike had been scrapped as Socialist Worker went to press.

Unions had planned a general strike for this Wednesday before Mulki resigned.

Hani Mulki—resigned after protests

FIGURE IT OUT

15 locations across Gaza were hit with Israeli airstrikes on Saturday night and early Sunday morning

21 year old paramedic Razan Ashraf al-Najjar was shot dead by Israeli troops last Friday as she treated injured protesters

70 years ago Israel was founded—recent protests in Gaza are marking this date

ISRAEL pounded Gaza with airstrikes and murdered yet more Palestinian protesters last week.

Israeli missiles struck 15 locations in Gaza on Saturday night and early Sunday morning.

It followed a barrage of strikes on Gaza earlier last week.

Israel said the latest strikes were in

response to rockets fired from Gaza. The rockets were said to have been fired in reaction to the killing of 21 year old paramedic Razan Ashraf al-Najjar.

She was shot in the stomach by Israeli soldiers on Friday as she treated injured Palestinian protesters along the fence that separates Gaza from Israel.

Some 119 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed by Israeli forces since protests began in late March.

Palestine supporters in Britain were set to protest against the killings on Tuesday of this week.

It comes ahead of a visit by Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu on Wednesday.

Israeli airstrikes batter Gaza

A hostile nightmare

STUDENTS AT Liverpool Hope University have been fundraising to bring young Palestinian refugees to Merseyside for a fortnight in June.

Filling in the forms for their visa applications was a bureaucratic nightmare.

Palestinians apply for their visas via Jordan and are then given an appointment at the British Consul in Ramallah.

There they are expected to produce all relevant documents and hand over their passport for processing. This sounds straightforward but it soon became clear this was a enormous task.

The forms are huge. We needed to provide information on each young person, their siblings and their parents.

Each time we answered a question a further drop down box appeared, with more intrusive questions.

To get clarity, and to see if we could process them as a group, I wrote to the British embassy in Jordan.

They replied telling me they were "not allowed to answer my questions" and I should contact the British immigration authorities.

They then replied telling me they would answer my questions in an email, but that each email response would cost £5.58.

I decided to phone. Now I was told that I had to enter my credit card details before I could speak to a customer service officer and that I would be charged £1.50 per minute.

This is what the "hostile environment" looks like to poor people hoping for a short stay in Britain.

Michael Lavalette
Liverpool



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Just a thought...

No to the S*n and its racism

THE FIRST anniversary of the horrific bombing of the Manchester Arena was marked by united sorrow and sympathy.

By contrast The Sun newspaper dedicated a whole page to an article headlined, "After Manchester we said: 'Don't Look Back In Anger' perhaps it's time we DID".

"Within weeks of this barbarism, people seemed to have forgotten it," said the article.

The Sun specialises in poisonous attacks on working class people.

Mancunians and others should respond to this latest attack by following the lead of our Liverpool comrades and organising a serious boycott.

John Murphy
Stockport

Bailiff scum evict travellers

TRAVELLERS WERE evicted from the Hovefields site near Cambridge last week.

Constant & Co is the bailiff firm that evicted them. It is the subject of a number of complaints regarding needless destruction of property during forced evictions.

Constant & Co has form—The Dale Farm Housing Association submitted a dossier to the High Court regarding a previous eviction at the Hovefields site undertaken by the company.

Mike Ellis

19th century sugar tax

THERE WAS a working class campaign against a sugar tax in the 19th century. There was a song referencing it called Sour Pies on the folk album Deep Lancashire.

Tony Horne
On Facebook

Redistribute Greek wealth

THE ANSWER to the crisis in Greece is to redistribute wealth. The European Union was set up to benefit business.

It will always prioritise big business and wealthier countries. German business benefits from the euro, while most Greeks are impoverished.

Tony Lowe
On Facebook

Oxbridge colleges are dripping with wealth

KNOWING THAT Oxford and Cambridge universities were bastions of wealth and privilege did not prepare me for the recent revelations they have a combined fortune of £21 billion.

The reality of the lives of the majority of the people living in these towns is a million miles away from the wealth of the universities.

In the middle of Oxford homeless people sleep on the streets.

A twenty minute bus ride out of the city centre will take you from Oxford's

“dreaming spires” to areas of deep poverty. A quarter of children in the city live below the poverty line.

For the majority of workers, life in Oxford is one long struggle to meet some of the highest rents in Britain.

Despite their incredible wealth, Oxford and Cambridge universities are incapable of addressing the everyday problems faced by the populations of the towns they dominate.

Ian McKendrick
Oxford

Why RMT voted against Labour affiliation

THE RMT union decided to maintain our current political strategy and not affiliate to the Labour Party at a special general meeting in Doncaster.

The debates I took part in at London region came down to concerns about right wing councillors and the majority of MPs.

Comrades made the point, why should we finance these people? We can continue to finance MPs like Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell.

Some people felt we should affiliate to help rid the party of the right

Friends want to be reunited

wingers. As well as the London region, areas such as Merseyside and Scotland were also against affiliation.

I was against affiliation. Now that the decision has been made it's important that we use

our resources to support the people on the left of the party.

The fight against driver-only operation continues. On the same day as the special meeting, it was announced that three London tube lines are balloting for action.

Comrades in the London transport region are also organising to mobilise against the racist DFLA.

There are big battles ahead and we need to fight on all fronts.

Phil Rowan
South London

THE REAL FACE OF TOMMY ROBINSON

Tommy Robinson's jailing has become a rallying point for racists across Britain. Their "Free Tommy, free speech" protest in London on 9 June is a way to bring terror onto the streets. Tomáš Tengely-Evans looks at why the fascist poster-boy is a real threat

Why he's in prison

Nazi Tommy Robinson is back as a central figure of a growing racist street movement. Jailed for filming people involved in a trial in Leeds last week, he's become a "free speech" martyr for the far right.

Robinson was trying to use a sexual abuse case to stir up Islamophobia. He likely knew that he would be arrested for trying to film the defendants, restricted by contempt of court laws in this instance as something that could prejudice the trial.

He also probably knew he would be jailed as he had a suspended sentence for a similar offence. He might not have expected a sentence of 13 months, but the plan had the desired effect. It focussed the gathering forces of the racist far right.

Almost 600,000 people have signed a petition demanding his release. A demonstration in London this Saturday could see thousands of racists marching on his behalf.

Robinson isn't for free speech. He wants to rip away free speech and democratic rights from Muslims, migrants, minorities and the left.

A committed Nazi

Robinson's real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon. He took the pseudonym when he founded the English Defence League (EDL) in 2009. Robinson wanted to hide the fact that he is a life-long Nazi.



Robinson's supporters in the Welsh Defence League show their true colours



Robinson was exposed as having been a member of the British National Party

He claimed that "there's nothing far right about me" and that the EDL was "human rights organisation". In an early EDL video, men in balaclavas burned a Swastika flag.

The idea was to prove they weren't Nazis. But they can't have had much trouble getting hold of the flag—the EDL's leadership was riddled with Nazis from the beginning.

Robinson himself was exposed as having been a member of the fascist British National Party (BNP) in the 2000s.

Disgruntled members of the group had released YouTube footage revealing his identity.

BNP members Chris Renton and David Cooling ran the EDL website and the admin on the Luton EDL Facebook group.

BNP members openly played a leading part when Robinson organised an Islamophobic race riot in Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, in January 2010. Two of its councillors were part of directing the violence on the day.

Nazi terrorist group Combat 18 was also on the demonstration.

Alongside organising racist violence on the streets, Robinson briefly branched out into electoral politics in 2012.

The EDL signed a cooperation agreement with the British Freedom Party (BFP), a split from the BNP. Robinson and his cousin Kevin Carroll, who was also a founder-member of the EDL, were appointed deputy chairmen.

Robinson now hangs out with fascists and white supremacists from the US and European alt-right movement. They include Canadian Lauren Southern, who argues white farmers in South Africa are facing "genocide".

A history of racist violence

Tommy Robinson declared that "We cannot rule out violence" ahead of an EDL mobilisation in Bolton on 20 March 2010.

On the day the demonstration

didn't go to plan thanks to opposition. Anti-fascists from Unite Against Fascism (UAF) were attacked by cops throughout the day.

But when young local Muslims joined UAF in Bolton's town square, the cops pushed the EDL out of town.

Robinson had hoped for round two of one the EDL's first outing in Stoke-on-Trent at the beginning of that year.

Socialist Worker reported at the time, "Football hooligans, known fascists and anti-Muslim fanatics gathered in the city centre. Hundreds of local people also joined the EDL brawl.

"There were reports that transport came from the barracks of the Mercian regiment."

"And at the end of the demonstration hundreds of EDL supporters swept through an Asian area attacking homes, shops and cars."

Both Robinson and EDL supporters were never far from racist violence.

They sniffed another opportunity after the killing of British soldier Lee Rigby in Woolwich, south east London, in 2013.

Fascists and football hooligans saw an opportunity and began mobilising. Robinson was involved in racist protests organised by the United People of Luton, a forerunner of the EDL.

Some 300 racists rampaged through the town on 24 May. The United People of Luton group

a shot in the arm. Some 1,000 of them marched down Whitehall that week.

The EDL followed up with a plan to march from central London to Woolwich. The route would have taken them through the hearts of Tower Hamlets and Newham, boroughs with large Muslim and Asian populations.

Anti-fascists organised against them—and in the end only 25 turned out before their march in Hyde Park. Robinson and Carroll were arrested and charged with "obstructing the police" when they tried to walk through Tower Hamlets anyway.

Tommy Robinson's aim is—and always has been—to direct racism against Muslims.

The EDL was formed out of a racist backlash against Muslims in Luton in March 2009.

A small group of Muslims held a protest as the Royal Anglian Regiment paraded through the town to welcome troops home from Afghanistan.

Fascists and football hooligans saw an opportunity and began mobilising. Robinson was involved in racist protests organised by the United People of Luton, a forerunner of the EDL.

The attack gave the flagging EDL

ALAN (LAKE) Ayling, the City investor who bank-rolled the EDL (top) Anders Breivik, the Norwegian mass murderer, paid also paid homage to Robinson's group



IN ITS heyday in 2010, the EDL liked to march into Asian areas attacking shops and anyone they thought 'looked Muslim'

had claimed it was simply about "Islamic extremism" not Asians or Muslims.

At the EDL's founding press conference Robinson made clear the street movement intended to target Muslims. "We are doing this to challenge Islamic extremists who have been unchallenged in our country for 10 to 15 years."

"They are recruiting on our streets and colleges and the government is doing nothing."

He also went on to accuse politicians of not representing the "non-Muslim community" and attacked Muslim women who wear the burka.

Within two years Robinson had escalated from talk of "Islamic extremism"—far right code for all Muslims. Speaking in East London in 2011 Robinson threatened "every single Muslim watching this" with violent reprisals.

"On 7/7 you got away with killing and maiming British citizens," he said. "And you had better understand that we have built a network from one end of the country to the other end."

"And the Islamic community will feel the full force of the EDL if we see any of our British citizens killed, maimed, or hurt on British soil ever again."

His rich, racist friends

The EDL was founded in the luxury flat of banker Alan Ayling in 2009.

He went by the pseudonym "Alan Lake", until he was exposed in December 2011, and described himself as a "counter-jihadist".

Ayling was a Pacific Capital Investment Management director and worked at the International Development Bank.

He admitted, "I have given some money to help some EDL things happen."

Ayling made clear his aim at a far right conference organised by the Swedish Democrats in September 2009. "We're trying to reach out to more physical groups like football fans," he said.

"These are people who are happy to go out on the street."

"Everybody else is scared of being beaten up and attacked, but they are not scared of that."

And he praised the Nazi Anders Breivik's Oslo massacre as "chickens coming home to roost".

Also at the EDL founding meeting was "Dominique Devaux" or "Gaia", who was named as millionaire Ann Marchini by the Sunday Times newspaper. "Devaux" supported BNP London Assembly member



Richard Barnbrook after his election in 2009.

She was a member of the BFP and the US-based far right organisation the Center for Vigilant Freedom. It backed the EDL and organised conferences of the European fascist and far right parties.

Robinson's latest rallies are clearly well-funded. Behind these "grassroots" demonstrations, someone is plying him with money once again.

An inspiration to Nazi and racist murderers

Nazi Anders Breivik murdered 76 members of the Norwegian Labour Party youth organisation in 2011. He praised Tommy Robinson and other EDL members as an inspiration.

He released a Nazi manifesto to over 1,000 supporters before the massacre. It mentioned the EDL 29 times and the mailing list including 600 EDL members.

In his manifesto Breivik wrote his "assigned mentor" was "Richard the Lionhearted" in the Knights Templars far right group. At first EDL member Paul Ray—"Richard the Lionheart"—denied it was him, but soon said, "I definitely could have been his inspiration".

Breivik wasn't the only racist murderer who looked up to Robinson.

Darren Osborne drove a van into a crowd of worshippers outside Finsbury Park Mosque in north London last summer.

He murdered Muslim man Makram Ali and injured a further 12 in the racist attack.

While Osborne acted alone, he was inspired by Tommy Robinson's incitements against Muslims.

At the court Osborne was described as a "ticking time-bomb" and "brainwashed" by Robinson's social media posts. "Darren has been watching a lot

of Tommy Robinson stuff on the internet," said his partner Sarah Andrews.

"I have pleaded with Darren to stop watching this sort of thing, but he just wouldn't stop."

Don't be fooled again

Tommy Robinson and Kevin Carroll quit the EDL leadership in October 2013 as the group was in disarray. They announced their resignation at a press conference organised by Quilliam, an "anti-extremism group" that promotes loyalty to the British state.

Robinson claimed that he was concerned by the "dangers of far-right extremism" in the EDL. He made clear his aim was still to "counter Islamist ideology" but claimed he would do it "not with violence but with democratic ideas".

He has dined out on his "conversion" ever since, but it should not fool anti-fascists and anti-racists.

His aim is still to stir up racism and violence against Muslims. In 2016 Robinson branded Muslims fleeing the West's wars in Middle East as "fake refugees".

"I'd personally send every adult male Muslim that has come into the EU over the past 12 months back tomorrow if I could," he tweeted.

His latest book is called *Mohammed's Koran—Why Muslims Kill for Islam*.

Robinson's EDL resignation statement tellingly said mobilising on the streets was "no longer productive".

His attempt to set up a British version of the Islamophobic German street movement Pegida failed in 2016.

But the rise of the alt-right and the Democratic Football Lads Alliance's (DFLA) thousands-strong street mobilisations have changed this. He organised a 4,000-strong "free speech rally" in London last month that brought together Nazis, the DFLA and Ukip.

And, since his arrest, the DFLA have gone from distancing themselves from Robinson to focussing on him.

Robinson's ability to adapt is what makes him so dangerous.

Throughout the years he has taken on many different guises and ingratiated himself with various organisations.

But throughout all his incarnations, he has always been a fascist. Now he senses an opportunity to rebuild a fascist street movement.

Anti-fascists will have to mobilise to push him back once again.

The EDL was an inspiration for Norwegian mass murderer Anders Breivik

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

CARDIFF

The Fight for Trans Liberation

Wed 13 Jun, 7.30pm, Little Man Coffee Company, Bridge Street, CF10 2EE

Pamphlet launch with Laura Miles

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

'Kill all the Gentlemen'—class struggle and change in the English countryside

Thu 14 Jun, 7pm, The Swarthmore Education Centre, 2-7 Woodhouse Square, LS3 1AD

Book launch with author Martin Empson

SCARBOROUGH

'Kill all the Gentlemen'—class struggle and change in the English countryside

Sat 30 Jun, 7.30pm, Tap and Spile, 94 Falsgrave Rd, YO12 5AZ

Book launch with author Martin Empson

SWANSEA

The Fight for Trans Liberation

Thu 14 Jun, 7.30pm, Brynmill Community Centre, St Albans Rd, SA2 0BP

Pamphlet launch with Laura Miles

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

WEEKLY MEETINGS

Political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

ABERDEEN

Is socialism possible?

Wed 13 Jun, 6pm, Belmont Cinema Cafe, 49 Belmont St, AB10 1JS

BARNSLEY

US politics and gun control

Thu 14 Jun, 7pm, YMCA, Blucher St, S70 1AP

BIRMINGHAM

Do we need violence to get real social change?

Wed 13 Jun, 7pm, Birmingham LGBT Centre, 38/40 Holloway Circus, B1 1EQ

BRADFORD

Politics of the mind—Marxism and mental distress

Thu 14 Jun, 7pm, Glyde House, Little Horton Lane, BD5 0BQ

BRISTOL

Dylan Thomas—the poetry and politics

Wed 13 Jun, 7.30pm, YHA, 14 Narrow Quay, BS1 4QA

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Where is Ireland going?

Wed 13 Jun, 7.30pm, Red Triangle Cafe, 160 St James's St, BB11 1NR

CAMBRIDGE

Marx@200—the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx

Thu 14 Jun, 7.30pm, River Lane Centre, River Lane, CB5 8HP

CHESTERFIELD

Marx@200—the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx

Thu 14 Jun, 7.30pm, Chesterfield Library, New Beetwell St, S40 1QN

COLCHESTER

1968—the fire last time

Thu 21 Jun, 7.30pm, Hythe Community Centre, 1 Ventura Drive, CO1 2FG

DERBY

Iran, imperialism and the Middle East

Thu 14 Jun, 7pm, West End Community Centre, Mackworth Rd (next to Britannia Mill), DE22 3BL

EDINBURGH

Police, racism and the state

Wed 13 Jun, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 7 Victoria St, EH1 2JL

EXETER

How can Palestine be free?

Sat 9 Jun, 2pm, Exeter Community Centre, 17 St. Davids Hill, EX4 3RG

GLASGOW

New US imperialism—Trump's plan in Iran

Thu 14 Jun, 7pm, Avant Garde, 33-44 King St, Merchant City, G1 5QT

HARLOW

Trump not welcome

Thu 14 Jun, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 1 Church Leys, CM18 6BX

HUDDERSFIELD

Trump, Iran and the threat of wider war

Wed 13 Jun, 6.30pm, Brian Jackson House, 2 New North Parade, HD1 5JP

HULL

1968—the fire last time

Thu 21 Jun, 7pm, Cafelicious, 104 Cottingham Rd, HU6 7RZ

ISLINGTON

Why we hate Mondays—Marxism and alienation

Wed 13 Jun, 7pm, The Old Fire Station, 84 Mayton St, N7 6QT

NEWHAM

Trump and the threat of wider war

Wed 13 Jun, 7pm, Stratford Advice Arcade, 107-109 The Grove, E15 1HP

SOUTH

Windrush—exposing the hypocrisy at the heart of "Britishness"

Wed 20 Jun, 7pm, Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra Rd, facing Windrush Square), Brixton, SW2 1EP

WALTHAM FOREST

'Snowflake generation'—what do socialists say about free speech?

Wed 13 Jun, 7.30pm, William Morris Community Centre, 6-8 Greenleaf Rd, Walthamstow, E17 6QQ

WEST

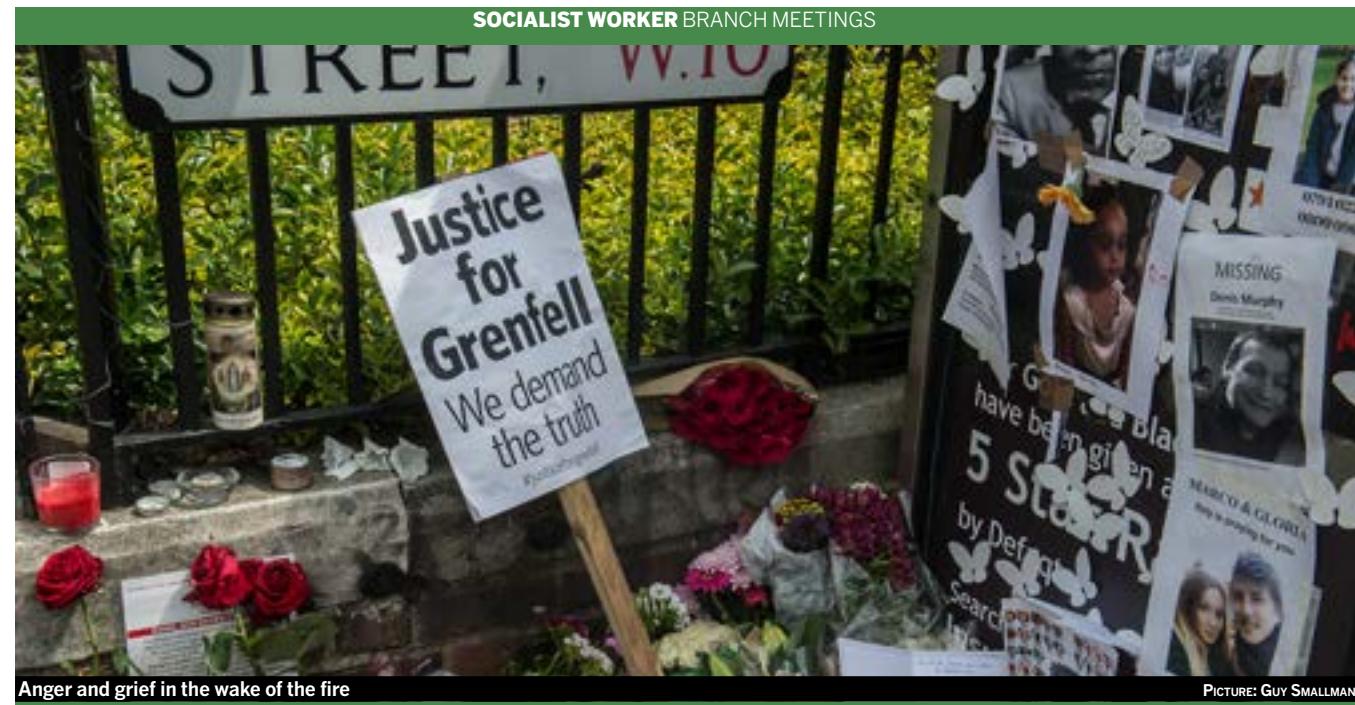
Do we need a revolution to end racism?

Thu 14 Jun, 7.30pm, Y Lounge, YMCA West London, 25 St Mary's Rd, W5 2RE

YORK

Why Marx matters

Wed 13 Jun, 7.30pm, Sea Horse Hotel, 4 Fawcett St, YO10 4AH



PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

One year on.... How do we get justice for Grenfell?

BRIGHTON & HOVE

Thu 14 Jun, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Ship St, BN1 1AF

LONDON: CENTRAL

Thu 14 Jun, 6.15pm, Room 235 UCL Foster Court Building, Malet Place, WC1E 6BT

CAMBRIDGE

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Love Island revels in people's alienation from each other

The popularity of TV programmes such as Love Island tells the story of how capitalism makes commodities of everything around us, argues **Sarah Bates**

SEX SELLS—and TV bosses know it. Love Island returns to ITV2 this week for a fourth season. It was a huge hit last year, drawing in the biggest ratings ever for the channel.

The premise is simple—young men and women live in a Big Brother-style villa in Spain.

Housemates and the public vote on evictions.

But unlike Big Brother, romantic relationships are not side elements of the show, but the central theme of it.

The winning couple bag £50,000 and media exposure—former contestants are now busy doing the reality TV circuit.

Contestants are better placed to stay in the game if they're formally "coupled" up with someone else—decided by a brutal weekly showdown.

Those who are unable to find someone to couple up with are "dumped" and have to pack their bags.

The couples then spend a week going on dates. But they always know the public is watching, and may be ready to vote them out if their relationship isn't performed well enough.

Last year contestant Montana describes how the audience would feel "relieved" to see her "deliver the goods" after she kissed a contestant.

Condoms

Host Caroline Flack tried to claim that, although the contestants' villa comes with its own Love Island branded condoms, the sex is "not gratuitous".

Some are keen to see Love Island as a beacon of liberation.

In a Metro newspaper article journalist Rebecca Lewis claimed, "Although we see the women walking around scantily clad, we see the men as well."

But the show's success is not a victory for those who celebrate true sexual liberation—but those who commodify sexuality.

In capitalism everything is up for sale. This means our most private moments become just another thing to be sold back to us. In turn, we become distorted.

In part, Love Island is sold as a form of escapism. It can be satisfying to become absorbed into other people's lives rather than worry about your own.

There is nothing innately shameful about sexual exploration.

Romance and sexual relationships should be more freely discussed in all their forms, not merely as a story of competition.

But the weaponisation of affection in Love Island is a symptom of a society that monetises everything about us.

Theatre



ELLIE NUNN as Minnie Gascoyne and Harry Hepple as Luther Gascoyne

PICTURE: IDIL SUKAN

Sex and politics in DH Lawrence play

RELATIONSHIPS, STRIKES and the strife of working class life are brought together in DH Lawrence's *The Daughter in Law*.

Set against the backdrop of the 1912 Miners' Strike in Nottinghamshire, it follows the troubles of newly-weds Minnie and Luther Gascoyne. Ellie Nunn and Harry Hepple's performances show how the frustration of passion lost plays out.

But the two make the scenes more than a battle of wills between two people. The protagonists' lives reflect the inequality that surrounds them.

Luther works down a mine while Minnie "makes home".

He in turn has been made emotionally restricted by his protective mother, who simultaneously resents the

dependence of men. "How is a woman to have a husband if all the men belong to their mothers?" asks Minnie, as no one can open up and give themselves away.

Minnie and Luther are on an unequal footing.

With an adequate inheritance, she is better off than her miner husband. Years of working in service for the wealthy have given Minnie airs, which is brought out as Luther is goaded for his lack of oomph.

This comes to a head after Luther is told a devastating secret and needs £40.

More fundamentally, Minnie feels the burden of inequality within marriage as aspirations and reality clash.

A stand-out scene comes after Minnie spends large sums on

prints in a desperate effort to provoke a reaction out of this lifeless man. Luther casts them into the hearth.

The play is a portrayal of working class people in their own voice. The cast talk in the Eastwood village dialect throughout.

But it isn't romantic about notions of "community", which can be suffocating as well as filled with solidarity.

Lawrence touched on all the questions that brings up. And, in the first revival for 15 years in London, director Jack Gamble's production and cast powerfully relay them to audiences today.

Tomas Tengely-Evans

The Daughter in Law is at the Arcola Theatre until 23 June. Directed by Jack Gamble. Go to arcolatheatre.com

THEATRE

ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE

by Roy Castleton

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THIS PLAY shows that life for the working class is always a battle, whether at work or serving in the forces at war.

The action begins with the four actors telling us with pride about where they lived, what they did and who they were. Minimal props are used—a gate-leg table, chairs, china cups and saucers and a teapot with tea cosy.

George Mason is an old miner, trade unionist and husband to Connie, a strong woman. Tom is returning from army service in World War II.

Mixed feelings are evident as we learn of the loss of an older son on the beaches of Normandy.

Patriotism and bravery are explored, as are issues of grief and loss.

Suffering

Connie takes control of the situation and forces father and son to face their loss and grief.

Liz, Tom's long-suffering partner has waited five years for him without any knowledge of whether he was alive or dead.

Loyalty is important, whether to family, the mine or to political ideals.

George is suffering from lung disease. He has very strong political views and dreams of a better life following a change of government.

He values tenacity, has a stubborn belief in the working class and pride in his role in the union.

The play is poignant. The dialogue is gritty and attention-grabbing.

All four actors were excellent, especially George, whose mannerisms and accent were spot on.

The play ended with the four characters telling us again with pride about who they were and what they had achieved.

Judith Power



Ray Ashcroft as miner

George Mason PICTURE: TOM JACKSON

What's been happening in Iran?

A growing strike wave has hit in recent months.

Teachers have been on strike to demand better pay. Workers in small cities recently struck over non-payment of wages.

And 900 workers in the Hepco construction company are on strike over the same issue. They have even barricaded railway lines.

The latest action is a strike by truck drivers—and that's massive.

It began in one province on 22 May and spread across Iran until it became a national strike. It's a powerful strike that has hit fuel deliveries so there are shortages in a number of cities.

There's also been a lot of solidarity from other workers.

Truck drivers have blockaded major roads and there are reports that they've been joined by taxi and minibus drivers.

The majority of the drivers own their own trucks, but end up doing work for the government. Their demands are to do with pay, fees and taxes because prices have gone up but their wages have not.

The fact that they own their own trucks has paradoxically made their strike effective because it's easier for the workers to control.

If it was one company, or a few companies, the state could crack down on it much more easily.

But because it's these truck-owning drivers it's more difficult to send the police to them—although they have started to do that.

How has the state reacted?

The state has made some concessions to the truck drivers. It has reduced the costs of fuel and the fees that they have to pay. Costs have reduced by 20 percent. So we see partial victories for the strikers.

But at the same time the state has tried to break the strikes by protecting scabs and by bringing in governmental trucks to deliver fuel.

And in the last week they have sent more police to break the truck drivers' strikes.

Workers involved in the Hepco and teachers' strikes have also been arrested and charged or imprisoned.

Yet the strikes have held and that's really important.

What's the background to the latest action?

It's to do with the ruling class's programme of privatisation and economic reforms.

In the last ten to 15 years there has been a quiet wave of privatisation and "semi-privatisation" where industries are bought up by officials of the state or state institutions.



STRIKING CONSTRUCTION workers in Iran occupying railway lines last month

IRAN HIT BY STRIKE WAVE

Iranian socialist Peyman Jafari spoke to Socialist Worker about a series of militant strikes rocking the state—and how the workers' actions offer a vision for change



The government changed the constitution to make privatisation easier.

Under the previous government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad changes to the constitution made it easier for private companies to invest in the state sector.

The main issue with this is that protection for workers' goes down. So they also changed the labour law, so that it doesn't apply to smaller industries. This is in an

These actions could last longer and turn into workplace organisations

reforms and it is giving a bit more liberty. But it has very neoliberal policies of privatisation, the liberalisation of prices and introducing temporary contracts.

It has even introduced the privatisation of healthcare and education.

The Hepco strikes are the latest backlash against this process. Hepco was privatised in 2007. Since then thousands of people have been sacked, and conditions have got worse.

The strikers want the government to renationalise Hepco, and they've had support from workers in other privatised factories.

How have the West's economic sanctions impacted on Iran?

Life has become more difficult in Iran. Prices have risen because of the sanctions and that has hurt working class people.

That will increase in the coming months when the sanctions that Donald Trump has reintroduced take effect.

But they may not have the same impact as two years ago because of the international dimension.

The issue of Iran has shown that great power politics has not disappeared.

The division between the US and Europe was already increasing. We shouldn't exaggerate it, but this fissure continues to widen because of differences over how to deal with Iran.

For Trump it will be more difficult to introduce unified sanctions because some Asian countries will not abide by them—India has said it will keep buying oil.

Europe is in negotiations to keep the nuclear deal in place.

So the sanctions will definitely have an effect but I don't think this will be on the same level as a few years ago.

It will become important for Iranian workers to oppose the sanctions.

At the same time they should also challenge the corruption in Iran, the privatisations, and the fact that the richest 10 percent of Iran's population barely pays tax.

Those are issues to be raised in order to concretely combine anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism in Iran.

Is there any connection with the protests last December and January?

There is definitely a connection because of the economic hardship. People are fed up and tired of fighting over contracts and wages. Unemployment is still very high.

But the December protests evaporated very fast. They were largely made up of unemployed people, so it was harder to hold them together.

We are now seeing workplace actions that could

last longer and create new organisations around them.

Earlier this month there were major protests in the city of Kazerun because the state wanted to re-divide the county.

What it shows is the general unhappiness among wide sections of people—and how small issues can ignite anger and bring people onto the streets and clash with police.

When the police used violence, the population responded by burning down the police station. Then the police fired on demonstrators, killing some.

It showed the explosive situation in these small cities.

Finally, earlier this month, there was a yearly event that the head of state Ayatollah Khamenei organises.

One independent student made a speech that openly criticised repression and the neoliberal economics—and also Western intervention and sanctions.

This was very important because it shows that opposing neoliberalism and the state's "reforms" shouldn't be separate from opposing imperialism.

Since the rise of Trump some pro-imperialist forces are preparing to work under Trump's directive for regime change.

So the student who spoke out has since been attacked by both them, and also by supporters of Khamenei.

What is the future for the struggle in Iran?

The trade unions in Iran are very weak, and there is heavy repression so we should be careful not to be overly optimistic.

But these strikes show that the working class can take the lead in Iran and can do the most harm to the state.

They also contradict the image of Iran in the Western media.

Women are resisting the compulsory wearing of the headscarf—which is another very good thing happening at the same time.

Even women who want to wear it are saying it should be the right of women to choose.

As the left we have to



support the women fighting back, and not leave the issue to the pro-imperialist right. The problem is that the issue grabs attention in the West because it resonates with the Islamophobic representations of Iran.

The issue is being hijacked by Islamophobia by some in the media in the West.

Meanwhile the actions of workers don't get the same attention because it gives agency to Iranians who could change their own life for the better.

Yet they show there is a hope for change in Iran that comes from below—not by looking to the West.

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Charlie Kimber looks at the crisis that led to Rajoy being forced out, and why his replacement shouldn't be trusted

THE FALL OF right wing Spanish leader Mariano Rajoy is a blow to supporters of austerity across Europe.

Rajoy has presided over seven years of harsh attacks on the working class. He lost a vote of no confidence in parliament on Friday of last week.

It follows a court case that saw dozens of people with links to Rajoy's ruling PP party, including a former treasurer, convicted of crimes relating to the use of an illegal slush fund.

This was used to finance party election campaigns between 1999 and 2005.

Judges issued prison sentences totalling 351 years and the PP was ordered to repay more than £200,000.

The judge said testimony from Rajoy and other party officials who said they knew nothing was "not credible".

In the end it was grubby corruption that destroyed Rajoy.

But battles over housing, pensions, women's rights and the resistance in Catalonia have all undermined him.

Change

The socialist grouping Marx 21 said, "We celebrate Mariano Rajoy's removal, but it is not enough to change the names and acronyms of the government.

"There needs to be social change, the end of repression and a more real democracy, including the right to decide on the future of Catalonia."

PSOE has totally opposed any attempt at Catalan independence. Sanchez will now have

Pedro Sanchez, the leader of Spain's Labour-type PSOE party, which tabled the motion to remove him.

The PSOE allowed Rajoy to form a government in 2016 after an inconclusive election.

It feared that another election would be disastrous for PSOE as its support had fallen.

Sanchez was removed as



ANALYSIS

Mariano Rajoy gone after he's implicated in corruption



PICTURE: EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

BACK STORY

Mariano Rajoy has been forced out after a vote of no confidence

- The Labour-type PSOE party president has taken over

- He has promised to stick to Rajoy's recent budget—an all-out assault on the working class

to deal with the issue. Direct rule by the Spanish state is due to end on Saturday. Sanchez said he would seek dialogue with the new Catalan government.

But he added that any negotiations would have to abide by the new Catalan government.

The extreme weakness of Sanchez's position means that another general election is highly likely before the end of the year.

BIGGEST

Recent polls suggest the right wing Ciudadanos party would be the biggest single party if there were an election now. The results also say that no strong government could be formed.

Other European governments will be hoping Sanchez can stabilise the country.

But there is deep anger in Spanish society. Unemployment is down from its peak of 26 percent in 2013, but is still close to 20 percent.

More than one in three young people are unemployed.

Almost half the workforce earns less than £200 a week.

More than a quarter of workers are on temporary contracts.

Meanwhile the rich are grabbing more and more.

With political turmoil it's time for workers, the Catalan movement, and all the campaigns to step up the fightback.



Huge independence march in Dumfries

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

THOUSANDS marched through the town of Dumfries in the south of Scotland last Saturday in the latest of a series of marches for Scottish independence.

Local police “estimated 10,000” people marched and, unusually, even tweeted a picture of the protest.

Many locals said it was the largest protest over any issue in living memory.

Some protesters travelled over a hundred miles to join the demonstration.

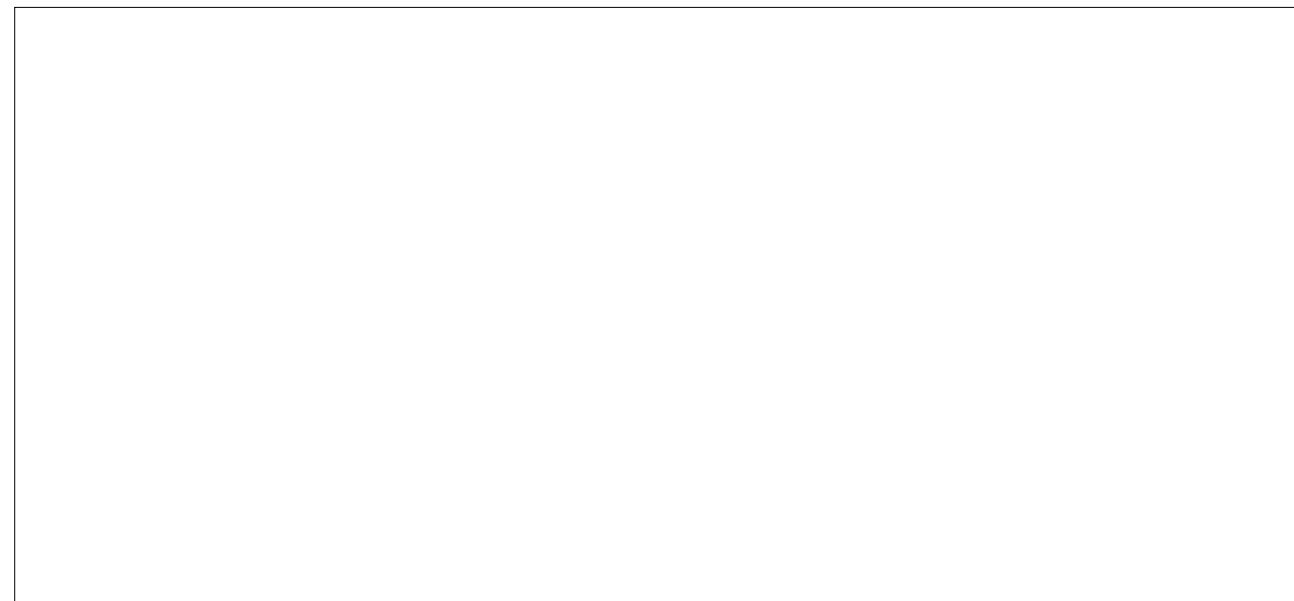
Among the Yes groups marching were those for pensioners, trade unionists and many from the local area. They were joined by the English Scots For Yes group.

Contrast

The large turnout locally stands in stark contrast to the 66 percent and 67 percent vote to reject independence in the areas that border England.

One local Tory politician said the march was “an affront to voters here”.

The Tories currently hold



PART OF the mass march in Dumfries, in the south of Scotland, last Saturday

all three Westminster MPs, and all three Holyrood MSPs in the respective constituencies that straddle the border regions.

Independence has started to dominate politics in Scotland again. Among the debates is the timing and circumstances of a second referendum, “legal” or not.

Last month organisers of an upcoming series of demonstrations, All Under One Banner, said over 50,000 people marched through Glasgow.

An official Scottish National Party (SNP) presence was hard to spot there but in Dumfries the support from the local party

leadership was clear. The publication of the SNP’s “growth commission” report has been pitched as a strategy to win over No voters to independence.

Right wing and business commentators have welcomed its pro-EU, pro-market prescriptions as “mature” and “responsible”.

John Kay, a member of the first minister’s standing council on Scotland and Europe, wrote in the Financial Times newspaper on Saturday.

“Watching the progress of Scottish nationalism is like watching a teenager grow up,” it said.

Kay added, “The report

believes the leftist image of Scottish politics with a strong pro-business focus, recognising that the success of small economies depends on the ability of strong domestic industries to sell specialised products in global markets.”

SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon wants keep Scotland’s bosses onside while taking recent supporters of independence for granted.

Triangulation

This kind of triangulation—with its echoes of Tony Blair—saw one former SNP minister brand the party “New SNP” last week.

A mass movement from below in 2014 nearly won the vote. Support grew when the campaign focussed on social issues such as the NHS.

What brought the British state close to breaking up was an active campaign of working class people fuelled by a desire to break from Westminster austerity, not narrow nationalism.

The independence movement needs the opposite strategy to that which Sturgeon’s leadership is offering if it is going to win.

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Northern Ireland—how Britain rules a last outpost of empire

Outrage that the Abortion Act 1967 doesn't apply to Northern Ireland has led to questions about its set-up. **Simon Basketter** looks at how Britain has maintained its political slum

Why isn't Northern Ireland in Ireland?

Britain created Northern Ireland in 1921, when resistance forced it to quit the rest of Ireland.

Six counties in the North were formed into a one-party state born in violence. Security forces terrorised the minority Catholic population. The Unionists, who ran Northern Ireland, declared that it would be "a Protestant state for a Protestant people".

The Northern Irish state enshrined Britain's policy of divide-and-rule. It relegated Catholics to being third class citizens—after the Protestant elite and Protestant workers.

What caused violence during "The Troubles"?

The Troubles started in Derry where Unionists ruled over the city's majority Catholic population by gerrymandering electoral boundaries.

Police baton-charged peaceful Civil Rights marchers off the streets of Derry in October 1968.

In 1969 the scale of resistance meant the Unionist regime couldn't keep control. The Labour government sent in British troops to prop up the Northern Ireland state—and soon they started killing Catholic civilians.

The Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA) emerged in response to this repression.

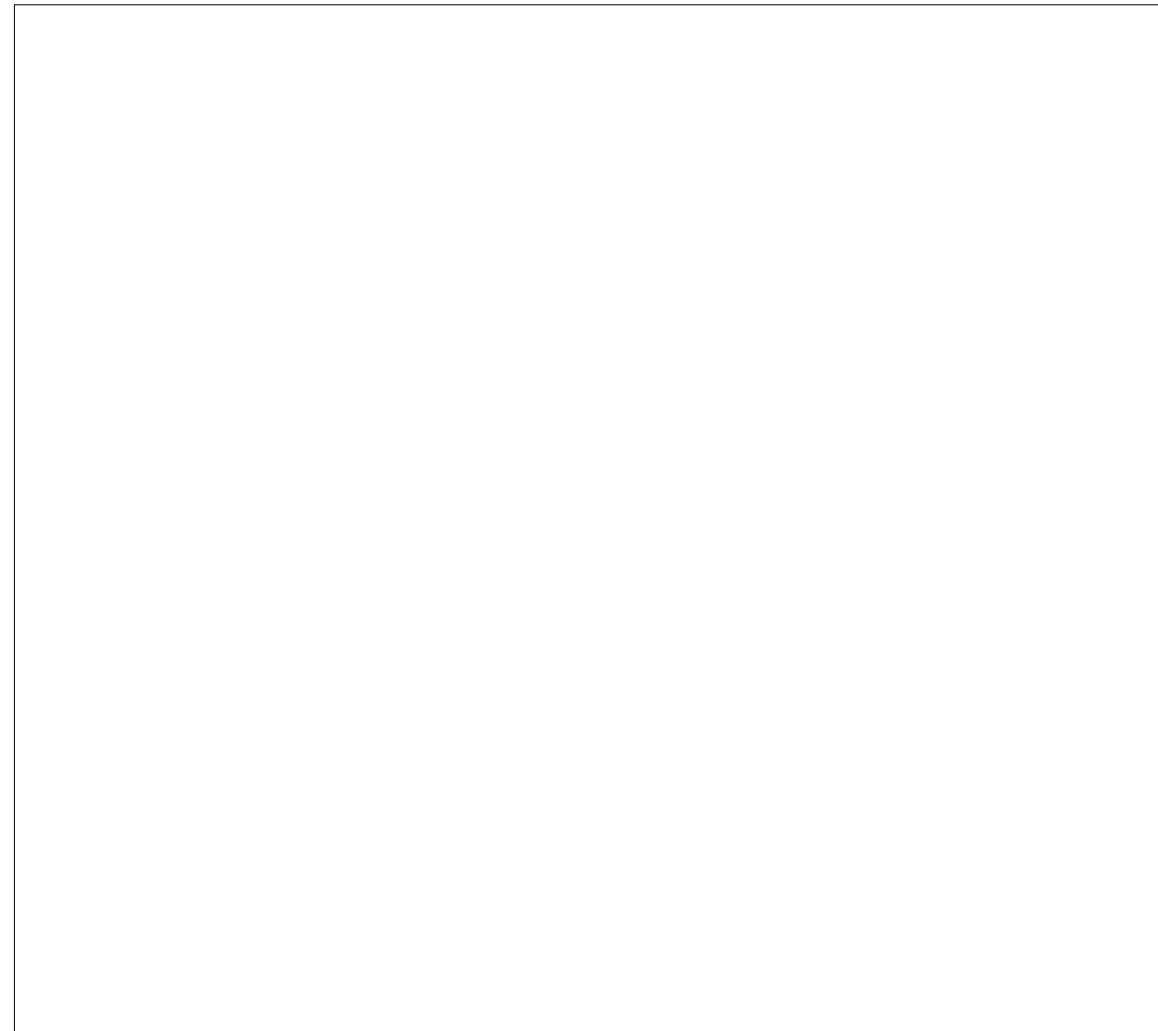
So why did it stop?

The violence of the Northern Ireland state provoked a quarter of a century of open conflict.

By the mid-1990s British governments had realised that they could not defeat the IRA by force.

Equally, the IRA weren't going to defeat the British state so there was stalemate.

Protests by ordinary people gave the spur for the peace process. At the same time Britain wanted to stabilise Northern Ireland. So they



PART OF an angry protest for abortion rights outside Belfast City Hall last week

pushed Unionist politicians into accepting that peace talks had to take place—and that Sinn Fein republicans had to be part of the process.

What was the peace deal?

The peace in Northern Ireland is not based on drawing Protestants and Catholics together, but on policing people apart.

The consensus reinforces segregation by insisting that opposed "communities" must be represented by politicians who fight for one group against the other.

So everyone elected to the Stormont

assembly has to identify themselves as Unionist, Nationalist or Other. Principles of "parallel consensus" and "weighted majority" then come into play.

This effectively means that all important decisions have to gain majority support from both Unionists and Nationalists.

The "others" are simply forgotten about.



Sinn Fein leader Michelle O'Neill (left) and DUP leader Arlene Foster have been unable to form a government

Why don't women have abortion rights in Northern Ireland?

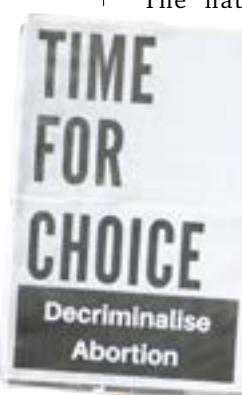
The 1967 Abortion Act, which legalised abortions in Britain, doesn't apply in Northern Ireland.

By banning abortions, Northern Ireland exports them instead. Hundreds of women—at least 724 in 2016 alone—travel to England each year.

In Northern Ireland opinion polls show about three-quarters of the public support abortion reform and equal marriage.

The Tories could legislate to bring in abortion rights in Northern Ireland, but they say it is a devolved matter.

But why hasn't this changed since the Act was brought in? In Northern Ireland legislation needs two majorities—unionist and nationalist. That means a party such as the DUP, with just



On Friday's protest in Belfast

over a quarter of the vote, can block any issue if it chooses.

When the Stormont assembly was up and running, the DUP used what's called a "Petition of Concern" more than 80 times to veto reforms. When the assembly narrowly voted in favour of equal marriage in 2015, the DUP used a veto to delay its introduction.

The assembly collapsed partially over this—but mostly over a corruption scandal and attacks on the Irish language.

Are only the bigots of the DUP to blame?

While most focus has rightly been on the bigots of the DUP, they aren't the only block to change.

The Tories are happy to push legislation over devolved governments when it suits them. But they need the DUP's support to stay in office.

After the Irish repeal vote, a lot of politicians have discovered they are for change.

Sinn Fein supported repeal in the South, but it was arguing over it as recently as six months ago. In Northern Ireland it voted to back abortion only in cases of rape and fatal foetal abnormality in 2015.

It is still against the extension of the 1967 Act as it is British legislation. But Sinn Fein politicians holding up a "North is next" sign at the referendum result in Dublin suggests the line may change.

The nationalist SDLP only permitted members to oppose its anti-choice policy as a matter of conscience as of 19 May. Yet its leader called for a "fit for purpose" abortion law so that "the days of exporting this issue are brought to an end" last week.

People before Profit and the Greens who each had one assembly member, are pro-choice.

The drive for change will come from below, not Stormont or Westminster.

"Six counties in the North were formed into a one-party state born in violence by the British"

IN BRIEF**Strike vote over Labour fire cuts**

FIREFIGHTERS IN the West Midlands have delivered a thumping vote for strikes in response to "exploitative" new contracts.

The FBU union members voted by 90 percent for strikes on an 82 percent turnout. They are fighting to stop the Labour-led fire authority introducing contracts that would force new starters to take on extra duties.

FBU West Midlands chair Andrew Scattergood said, "We have a mandate to strike and we will do if these contracts are not removed."

GMB union takes Amazon to court

THE GMB union is taking legal action against Amazon and three delivery companies.

The companies—Box Group, Lloyd Link Logistics and Prospect Commercials—claimed the workers were self-employed. But workers were effectively treated as employees because they had scheduled shifts.

Strike threat wins at Pirelli car plant

A THREAT of strikes at the Pirelli car factory in Carlisle has scored a victory for Unite union members.

Workers began balloting last month over the use of zero hour-type contracts.

They will receive holiday allowance as well as a 5 percent pay rise backdated to January 2018.

No to fascists in Chester-le-Street

ANTI-RACISTS ARE preparing to protest in Chester-le-Street, County Durham, on 16 June against a fascist demonstration.

The North East Infidels and Bishop Auckland Against Islam plan to march under the slogan, "No more refugees—no more terrorism".

● Go to Stand Up To Racism – North East on Facebook for more details

Stop the Merthyr breakfast club cuts

ACTIVISTS WERE set to protest against Merthyr Tydfil council's plans to slash school breakfast club workers' hours on Wednesday.

Steve Belcher, Unison union South Wales organiser, said, "This is an essential service delivering a healthy breakfast to any child in the area who needs one."

Merthyr council is under the control of an Independent group who do not appear to value our children's future and wellbeing in the way that we do.

"If the council's proposals go ahead it will be the children of Merthyr who will lose out."

LGBT+ PRIDE

HUNDREDS OF LGBT+ people and their supporters, including teachers, firefighters, health workers, environmental workers and students took part in a vibrant Oxford Pride parade last Saturday.

PICTURE: JULIE SIMMONS

RESTAURANT WORKERS

Workers at TGI Fridays feel tip top after strike

by ALISTAIR FARROW

WORKERS AT four branches of the TGI Fridays restaurant chain struck last Friday.

The Unite union members are fighting against bosses' changes to the tips policy, which has seen 40 percent of waiters' tips go to kitchen workers.

The strikes have hit the branches' custom hard. "Friday is our busiest day of the week," London Covent Garden striker Liv told Socialist Worker.

"The morning shift was very quiet and it's operating well under capacity here."

Workers at branches in Milton Keynes, Manchester and Piccadilly, London, were also out. "I've worked here for over ten years," Beattie told Socialist Worker.

"I didn't wake up one morning and decide I wanted to be a waiter but our options are limited."

She said that cuts have started being pushed through since the chain was bought by the private equity firm Electra.

"Lots of little things have been eroded," she said. "We used to have someone who



STRIKERS ARE confident they can win

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

was paid to come and clean the outside of the restaurant but now they're gone."

Workers from the Trafford Centre branch met shadow chancellor John McDonnell in Manchester last Friday.

"Solidarity with TGI Fridays' workers on strike against waiting staff tips being used to top up the wages of kitchen staff," he said.

Striker Shantel told Socialist Worker the strikes have been "very empowering," "If we

win, we'll win it for people at other TGI Fridays stores and make bosses think twice across the industry," she said.

The union is demanding a return to the old tips policy, which means taking the money back off the kitchen workers.

Bosses could use this to divide workers. Other demands, such as for a £10 an hour wage for all workers, could broaden the dispute.

GMB UNION CONFERENCE

Corbyn says Labour will take back water

ANGER AT Tory austerity and hopes for a Labour government marked the GMB union's national and sector conferences in Brighton this week.

Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn was set to address the national conference on Tuesday as

Socialist Worker went to press.

He was expected to slam the "failed and unpopular" privatisation of water companies and pledge to bring them back into public ownership.

His pledge concurred with the GMB's #TakeBacktheTap

campaign at conference.

It will take a fight from the trade union movement now, not just waiting for the next government, to push back against the Tories' attacks.

Delegates were also set to debate a motion on affiliating to Stand Up To Racism on Wednesday.

CINEMA WORKERS

Determination on the picket line

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

Spread fight to other flicks to pressure Picturehouse

WORKERS AT four branches of the Picturehouse cinema chain struck on Thursday and Saturday of last week.

The members of the Bectu arm of the Prospect union are fighting for the Living Wage of £10.20 an hour inside London.

Other demands include sick and maternity pay and trade union recognition.

The four sites out were Crouch End in north London, Hackney in east London, Picturehouse Central London, and East Dulwich in south London.

An "admin error" prevented workers from the Ritzy cinema in Brixton, south London joining others on the picket line.

Strikers told Socialist Worker how they intended to hold targeted strikes in an attempt to increase the dispute's media profile, rather than attempting to shut down sites.

Josh from the Hackney site said, "When we first

started at Hackney we shut down the site."

Now "it's harder for us to shut down Hackney" because bosses have a pool of reserve labour they can call in.

That raises questions about the way forward for the dispute.

On a previous occasion one union official said the turning point in a Ritzy dispute in 2014 was when columnist Will Self wrote a supportive piece.

But the Ritzy cinema is shut down every time workers walk out because union density is so high.

Joe from the central London site told Socialist Worker, "Most of us come out because we are treated like crap."

The potential for the dispute to spread is there.

But management are not going to be convinced to come around the negotiation table.

They must be forced there.

RAIL WORKERS

Strikes down the line as bosses change timetables

TUBE DRIVERS on a London Underground line were set to strike on Wednesday of this week and Thursday of next week.

RMT union members on the Jubilee Line are fighting the imposition of a new timetable that would affect weekend working.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash accused bosses of trying to "bulldoze through" changes.

He said management were "hell bent on imposing change through diktat rather than through the established negotiating machinery".

Aslef union members on the District Line are part of a separate dispute over rostering and working procedures.

They were also set to strike on the same day, but it was called off.

CONDUCTORS on Greater Anglia plan to strike on 16 and 23 June as part of their long-running fight against driver only operated (DOO) trains.

The RMT union members say DOO will make train travel unsafe and inaccessible.

The announcement comes at a time when rail bosses are being blasted for poor service. Northern Rail, Thameslink and Southern bosses were under fire last week after timetable changes caused delays and cancellations for passengers.

Over 100 Northern trains were still cancelled or severely delayed in Manchester, Lancashire and the Lake District.

Travel chaos is the result of running a service for profit rather than people.

CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS

Workers organise to win PCS strike ballot

by NICK CLARK

ACTIVISTS IN the civil service workers' union the PCS have begun the battle to deliver a solid vote for national strikes over pay.

Workers in government departments—including the HMRC tax office and the Department for Work and Pensions—will vote on action in a ballot lasting from 18 June to 23 July.

They are fighting to break the public sector pay cap, which has locked their annual pay increases at a below-inflation 1 percent for eight years.

PCS activists told Socialist Worker how they're working to beat the 50 percent turnout threshold demanded by Tory anti-union laws.

Pete Jackson, a union activist in Birmingham, said, "In my branch we're going to two offices that need work to deliver higher turnouts and holding pay calculator drop-ins."

"That's where people put their pay into the union's calculator, which works out how much people have lost under the pay freeze. It works really well."

He added, "We're also having a town committee pay campaign launch, and inviting speakers from the UCU and CWU unions to talk about



PUSHING FOR a Yes vote at HMRC Manchester

PICTURE: PCS HMRC MANCHESTER

how they delivered strike votes recently.

"Then we're going to sit down with a map and a plan of all the offices in the city and talk about what needs to be done."

Some branches have held gate meetings.

Marianne Owens, from the union's national executive committee, told Socialist Worker town committees were a good way for activists to "look at different offices in a location to see which ones

need some extra help in terms of the practical activity.

"So the big offices might have lots of enthusiastic reps in it, but if there's a small one with only one rep a town committee can support them."

"We should talk to people about what works—building rank and file networks."

Marianne said the first big focus is the "training sessions" to prepare activists for the ballot, set to take place on 9 and 16 June.

"We're inviting all

activists—all reps and interested members. We want to recruit to the union at the same time because we'll need lots of enthusiastic new reps.

"You might not be on a branch committee but there's stuff you can do," she said.

- For details of PCS ballot training days on 9 and 16 June go to bit.ly/PCSready

- Workers at the Acas conciliation service have won more jobs and guarantees of action over workloads and grading following strikes.

All of this reflects discontent and anger over the way that the union's leadership has

HULL COLLEGE

Seven more strike days

UCU UNION members at Hull College Group plan seven days of strikes this month as part of their struggle to stop job cuts.

Workers plan to strike for five days from Monday 18 June, and for two days from Tuesday 26 June.

The action follows three days of strikes in May against bosses' plans to slash hundreds of jobs.

Management want to cut 231 full time equivalent posts across the college group's three sites.

The UCU said this would amount to a third of the workforce.

UCU regional official Julie Kelley said the union "hoped the fresh strike dates would focus their employers' minds".

UCU CONGRESS

What was decided—when delegates got the chance

by SADIE ROBINSON

THE UCU union conference was marked by some extraordinary events last week.

But when discussions did take place, there was a strong mood to escalate struggle in both the Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) sector conferences.

HE delegates passed a series of motions and amendments to defend their USS pension scheme—in the teeth of opposition from union officials and the right.

Workers in over 60 universities held 14 days of strikes earlier this year to defend the scheme. UCU general secretary Sally Hunt pushed a deal to end the strikes that removed an immediate threat but gave no long term guarantees.

Expert

Instead it has set up a Joint Expert Panel (JEP) to look at the scheme's future. Delegates demanded more transparency and more say over the JEP.

They instructed the union to call a Special Higher Education Sector conference for USS branches in September or October to review its work.

Delegates authorised UCU negotiations to say there should be "no deterioration" in pensions. They should not accept the scheme is in deficit.

A motion demanded that any resolution to the pensions dispute "must have the full consultation and endorsement of the UCU membership".

And it called for a "review of UCU governance to expand democratic processes".

All of this reflects discontent and anger over the way that the union's leadership has

handled the dispute and the desire to transform the union.

HE delegates voted to call for the government to underwrite the scheme.

A composite motion highlighting the democratic deficit in the union was also passed. It put demands on how the expert panel now looking at the scheme should progress.

And it demanded that the union set up a committee to which the UCU's panel members will report, instead of negotiations being kept secret.

A late motion on the USS dispute that opens up the possibility of further strikes was also passed. It resolved to "call for a return to industrial action if any future proposals are not substantially better than the proposal rejected" on 13 March this year.

Carlo Morelli is on the UCU's national executive committee and a UCU Left supporter. He told Socialist Worker, "The right in the union, supporters of the Independent Broad Left (IBL), almost made their position explicit.

"Some argued that we can't say the scheme isn't in deficit. Others said we shouldn't tie negotiators' hands by insisting that pensions can't get worse."

Carlo said such arguments "open up a race to the bottom on pensions".

HE delegates also called for broader action on pay.

A motion resolving to ballot members for industrial action over pay was overwhelmingly passed.

Another motion committed the union to build a pay campaign "around the use of escalating strike action".

Workers will need to keep organising to defend pay, pensions, conditions and education.

SCHOOLS

Birmingham battle for jobs and learning

by DOUG MORGAN, assistant sec Birmingham NEU, NUT section

NEU UNION members at Springfield Primary School in Birmingham were set to continue hard-hitting strikes this week.

Following a strike day just before half term, NEU members at the school were set to continue with repeated strikes of three days a week, every week, for the rest of the summer term.

The strikes at Springfield Primary take place against plans for a restructure that will see further potential redundancies.

It will also remove teaching and learning responsibility (TLR) payments—meaning pay

cuts for some staff.

Workload has rocketed as many teaching assistant posts have already effectively gone and an enlarged leadership team will create an atmosphere of greater scrutiny without greater support.

According to some set to strike, "Workload has increased while morale has plummeted."

David Room, Birmingham NEU (NUT Section) general secretary, said, "Support staff have already been cut while the school has chosen to employ four 'directors' who will not have a substantive teaching requirement.

"Two alternative staffing structures have been proposed by NEU members at the school but these

were rejected by the school, leaving members with no choice but to strike in the interests of education.

"The strikes are happening because of individual circumstances.

"But they are indicative of what so many teachers and support staff are telling us—that they have simply had enough of government cuts, enough of unreasonable managements and enough of unmanageable workloads.

"The scale of the action that our members are prepared to take at Springfield shows their determination to protect jobs and defend the learning conditions of students."

- Please rush messages of support for Springfield to david.room@neu.org.uk

FURTHER EDUCATION

Pay action gives new hope

IN THE UCU Further Education conference, delegates passed motions and amendments calling for more strikes over pay. One amendment said local college strikes over pay had "laid the basis for a national campaign".

Many delegates from colleges that have struck over pay spoke. Richard from Tower Hamlets College in east London said the strikes had "involved members in a way we haven't seen before".

Margot from Croydon College in south London described how workers there had taken five days of strikes. "It's about our self-respect," she said, telling delegates that the action "galvanised" people.

She added, "This isn't over. But we want to see this spread."

Workers were buoyed by the fact that the bosses'

Association of Colleges had backed down on a threat to refuse pay talks while strikes continued.

Andrew Harden, UCU's head of FE, said the AoC had "done a complete backflip" after a threat of more widespread strikes. He added that it was "hard" to know how to respond to new offers.

"We can settle for less than we might have if we stuck out for more," he said.

Dave Muritu, a delegate from Sandwell College, spoke about a pay deal that had been agreed there after strikes. "Our deal is 6.25 percent over three years, maybe 6.5 if the college grows enough," he said.

"I'm pleased but it still represents three years of pay cuts." Dave argued that the union should "get a national campaign back on track so we can get more".

GET BEHIND NHS STRIKE IN WIGAN

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

HUNDREDS OF hospital porters, cleaners and other support staff are ramping up their fight against a dangerous new form of privatisation.

Unison and Unite union members at Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh (WWL) NHS Trust were set to strike for two days from Friday this week.

It will be the second 48-hour walkout against bosses' plans to outsource their jobs to WWL Solutions Ltd, a "wholly-owned subsidiary" in NHS England.

Workers were incensed by a tweet from Mike Evans, son of trust estates and facilities associate director David Evans.

Jobsworth

It said, "Everyone who has taken part in this strike is a lazy jobsworth looser that will never amount to anything."

"Set of scumbags just like you @jeremycorbyn."

One Wigan porter in Unison told Socialist Worker, "When I got into work last



NHS WORKERS on strike in Wigan last month

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

Friday everyone was enraged about the tweet. It only makes our fight stronger—we want to stick it to them more."

The first walkout gave workers confidence.

The porter said, "I had never been on strike before

and didn't think as many would show up.

"But almost everyone in my department of around 50 came to do at least a few hours on the picket line.

"Everyone had fun and it brought everyone together."

While WWL Solutions Ltd would be owned by the trust—for now—workers would no longer be on the NHS pay roll. This would allow bosses to attack wages and conditions.

Labour's shadow home

secretary Jon Ashworth announced plans last weekend to overhaul the Tories structural reforms of the NHS. These could include scrapping the Health and Social Care Act.

This is a shift left—but

the plans still don't include wholesale renationalisation of the NHS or a timetable for change. Wigan workers are right to fight now.

The porter said, "People are definitely up for going out again, but many are also worried about money. We have to say, 'Don't worry, there's a hardship fund', because we can't let them break us."

Programme

Unions should announce a programme of industrial action—including a strike that's longer than 48 hours.

They could also ballot workers at other hospitals facing outsourcing to turn the dispute into a national fight.

Other trade unionists need to collect in workplaces to support the strikers. And the Labour Party could easily sustain the strike if it threw its weight behind it.

A win in Wigan can be the start of rolling back NHS privatisation.

Send messages of support to jean.heyes@wwl.nhs.uk. Make cheques out to WWL Unison Welfare and send to Unison Office, Royal Albert Edward Infirmary, Wigan Lane, Wigan WN1 2NN

EAST LONDON

A two-week walkout in Tower Hamlets takes on housing bosses over pay

by SARAH BATES

HOUSING workers are fighting attacks on pay in Tower Hamlets, east London.

Some 20 strikers picketed both entrances of the Tower Hamlets Community Housing (THCH) office on Monday at the start of their two-week strike.

A rally heard from councillors, trade unionists and housing workers.

The estate cleaners, who voted 100 percent to strike, are paid an average of £21,000 a year and manage over



Tower Hamlets strikers picketing on Tuesday

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

3,000 properties. They keep the bins emptied, green spaces litter free, as well as sweeping and mopping communal areas.

THCH bosses want to impose "market based" pay on the workers.

Previously the Unison union members had been on the NJC local government pay scale.

The "market based" pay will mean pay grades are decided every two years by a private consultancy firm, Inbucon.

Strikers said the pay fight is part of resistance to wider attacks on the service.

Peter has worked there

for eight years. He said he is striking because "the new regime has meant so many changes".

"It's been one thing after another, and it's finally come to a head," he said. "When I started working here, it was a nice company to work for."

Uncertainty

Roshan, who has been an estate cleaner for over 12 years, said the changes meant "an air of uncertainty".

"Morale has been down and people are crying in the toilets," he added.

"They're proposing cuts to our Saturday hours. Where

do you stop cutting?"

The cuts to Saturday working would slash pay by thousands of pounds. They would mean rubbish left uncollected.

Peter said workers decided to strike for two weeks because "a week wasn't long enough".

"We want residents to complain, and for the phone to be ringing because nothing's getting done," he said.

Send messages of support to john.mccloughlin@towerhamlets.gov.uk. Yes To Fair Pay Unison public meeting—Tue 12 June, 4.15pm, Oxford House, Derbyshire St, London E2 6HG